

HEREFORDSHIRE SHORT MAT BOWLING ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

Present : Ian Park (Chair) Frances Jones Jim Wilkinson Ian Roe
 Sue Stannard David Millington Jones Becci Cox Merion Attwood
 Joe Loveys

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Jamie Harris, Les Phillips

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2020 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman - proposed by Sue Stannard & seconded by Joe Loveys

MATTERS ARISING – None not covered elsewhere in the agenda

AGENDA & DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

The meeting then considered the Agenda & Discussion Document which had been prepared by a sub-committee (IR / DMJ / JL) to identify the issues, and the various considerations relating to those issues, which the committee needed to address in order to (1) resolve matters left incomplete as a result of the sudden cessation of bowling activities in March and (2) to provide a framework for activity moving forwards under the new restrictions and guidelines. The Agenda & Discussion Document is appended to these minutes and provides the background to the committee's discussions. Decisions, action points and additional discussion points only are recorded in these meeting minutes.

AGM & Committee A number of committee members had previously indicated their intention to stand down from the committee at the 2020 AGM (IP, FJ, JH, LP). IP confirmed that he would stand down from his 2 roles at the conclusion of this meeting. FJ confirmed that she would relinquish her Vice Chairman position but was prepared to remain on the committee as a general committee member for the time being. JH and LP were not present and will be consulted separately as regards their positions. The committee therefore will comprise 8 members (with 2 more to be confirmed) but the following posts are currently vacant: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary & Competition Secretary (with President and A Team Captain to be confirmed). The HSMBA Constitution requires the committee to have at least 8 members, a requirement that is still being met irrespective of the decisions of the 2 members who have not yet confirmed their positions.

Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory situation regarding committee membership, the committee unanimously agreed that, on balance, the holding of the 2020 AGM in the near future remained impractical and would prefer to cancel it and target the next AGM being held in Spring 2021. The motions which had been put forward by the committee would be withdrawn and re-presented in 2021 and the proposals regarding fees would also be re-presented (and are, in fact, rendered unnecessary for the current year by decisions taken later during this meeting). ***The committee recognises that the ultimate decision regarding the AGM should rest with clubs so if any clubs or members feel strongly that an AGM should be held at the present time, they should make a member of the committee aware and the committee will reconsider the position.***

The association's year end financial statements will be distributed to clubs.

In the absence of an imminent AGM, the committee will continue to solicit interest in the vacant committee positions with a view to co-opting additional committee members to serve until the next AGM.

Presentation Evening The committee agreed unanimously that the 2020 and 2021 presentation evenings would be merged and held together when circumstances permit in 2021.

LEH Final 19-20 It was agreed (6 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention) that the LEH final should continue to be deferred with a view to it being played later in the season if possible.

Bromyard Triples 19-20 It was unanimously agreed that this competition would be cancelled and entry fees returned. IP / JW to sort out the return of entry fees (cheques received have not been banked and bank payments will be refunded).

Winter League 19-20 It was agreed (8 in favour, 1 against) that the leagues would be determined on average points. IR will perform the calculations and advise clubs of the final positions.

Membership and Fees 20-21 JW confirmed that the fixed costs which will be incurred, even in the absence of a full programme of county / national playing activity, are relatively low compared to the association's cash reserves so it was unanimously agreed that the annual club registration fee (£20 per club) and the HSMBA element of the player registration fee (£3 per player) would be waived for the current season. The ESMBA have indicated that they expect player registrations to occur as normal so registration forms will be distributed to clubs but the fee will be only £4 per player, all of which will be passed on to the ESMBA. SS will distribute the club and player registration forms. Player registration will have an initial deadline of 31st October and registrations by this date will form the county's 'bulk registration' submission

during November. Clubs need to remain particularly aware of the impact of player registrations on ESMBA Club Insurance (a club needs 6 registered players to qualify for the insurance).

Winter League 20-21 It was unanimously agreed that the 20-21 Winter League should be cancelled. The option will remain to introduce an alternative competition(s) later in the season should circumstances permit and there be an appetite amongst members.

County Competitions 20-21 The possibility of scheduling some county competitions in the second half of the season will be revisited in the November meeting when it is clearer what the appetite and playing situation is within the county. The ability to deliver any competitions at all will depend on a member taking on the role of Competitions Secretary on a temporary or permanent basis. IP reiterated that he is willing to provide help and guidance to anyone taking on the role but he is not able to attend any competitions. Clubs and members will be canvassed in an attempt to fill this role.

LEH 20-21 It was unanimously agreed to cancel the 20-21 competition. IP will inform the Gloucestershire clubs of this decision but will reiterate that it is the association's intention to continue to run this competition when circumstances permit.

Macmillan 2020 It was unanimously agreed to cancel the 2020 event. This does not preclude the association from running some form of charity competition later in the season should circumstances permit. IP will inform the non-Herefordshire clubs of this decision but will reiterate that it is the association's intention to continue to run this competition when circumstances permit.

National Qualifiers 20-21 The players who qualified for the National Finals in 2020 but who did not play their finals will now play those finals in April 2021 (IP to inform all Herefordshire qualifiers of the situation). Qualifiers for the Mixed Fours and Over-55 Pairs are currently planned to be held in Jan / Feb 2021. The scheduling of these competitions will be addressed in the November meeting.

County Teams 20-21 The 20-21 ICC competition has been cancelled but alternative competitions may be organised later in the season. No action will be taken at the present time regarding trials or team selections. FJ will cancel the bookings made at the Larruperz in respect of the scheduled home fixtures.

SS pointed out that HSMBA had paid a £160 entry fee for the 20-21 ICC competition. IR will write to ESMBA requesting refund of this fee as it will remain to be determined whether the county enters team(s) in any replacement competition.

Return to Play Timetable It was agreed unanimously that HSMBA timings should always be in line with, or behind, those issued by the ESMBA.

Club Status The sub-committee had developed a club questionnaire which was approved by the committee. This will be sent out to clubs with the club registration forms to be returned as soon as possible so the Association has a better idea of what activity is taking place within clubs. The questionnaire will be issued again in early November to help guide the committee's decisions at that time regarding activity later in the season.

Covid 19 Playing Guidelines The ESMBA guidelines have been distributed to clubs and updates will be distributed as and when received. These guidelines are key to the safe recommencement of short mat bowling activity and are fully supported by the HSMBA committee. The sub-committee had prepared a summary document highlighting the key points of the guidelines which was approved by the committee and will be distributed to clubs. Whilst not a substitute for the full guidelines themselves, the summary may help clubs and club members understand the key elements of the guidance.

The committee discussed its position regarding non-compliance with the guidelines. In the first instance, registration of clubs with the association **will not** be dependent on a club having first secured Safe Bowls Status as it is recognised that some clubs may choose to delay their restart or, at the extreme, may even choose, or be forced, to take a break from bowling activity. Such clubs are still encouraged to register with the association and the current season's registration fee waiver should facilitate this for smaller clubs. The association does, however, fully support the certification process instituted by the national governing body and non-compliance amongst member clubs (i.e. playing without securing Safe Bowls Status or playing in contravention of the guidelines) will result in an initial warning. Continued non-compliance will result in a second warning which will be followed, in the absence of adherence to the guidance, by consideration by the committee of de-registration of the club from the association. This action may have an impact on a club's relationship with its venue and its ability to continue to play, even as an unregistered playing group.

The ESMBA guidelines are based on the premise of observing full 2m social distancing at all times and the core guidelines do not reference face coverings other than in circumstances where social distancing is compromised (e.g. in handling mats and equipment in restricted storage spaces). More generally, people participating in sporting activities are not required to wear face coverings whilst playing. The ESMBA Risk Assessment document does, however, contain a reference to 'consider the use of face masks' under social distancing. The committee unanimously supported this advice and encourage clubs and members to consider the wearing of face coverings, albeit whilst recognising the existence of numerous exemptions on health and other grounds and recognising the need for tolerance and respect amongst and between members on this subject.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman IP thanked current and former members of the committee for their help and support during his tenure as Chairman and explained that he felt that the association, and the sport, are at a turning point and are encountering circumstances which may affect us for some time to come. As a result, he considered

that it was appropriate for a new Chairman to take over at this point who is able to commit to serve across this period. IP also referred to the Competitions Secretary role which he has enjoyed for the most part despite frustration at a minority of players who find cause to grumble at, usually minor, shortcomings without seeming to recognise organisers' best efforts to deliver enjoyable and smooth-running events. JL responded that he considered IP's competitions to be the best run in recent years.

SS, on behalf of the committee, thanked IP for his tremendous contribution to the association in each of his roles (A Team Captain, Competitions Secretary, Chairman) and, particularly, for his huge contribution to, and support of, the association and committee during his tenure as Chairman.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – the next meeting will be held by Zoom on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm



Herefordshire Short Mat Bowling Association

Committee Agenda and Discussion Document – 2 September 2020

Item	Issues & Considerations	Committee Action
AGM & Committee	<p>The May 2020 AGM was postponed and a number of committee members remain in place who indicated that they were stepping down at that AGM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the retiring committee members prepared to continue until the next AGM whenever that may be (or even beyond if required)? • The holding of a physical AGM is unlikely to be feasible in the short term so options need to be explored for either cancelling the 2020 AGM (feasibility may depend on committee members being prepared to continue until May 2021 and this would require the agreement of clubs in some form) or holding it via videoconference or remotely by correspondence. Association clubs or members could, of course, demand an AGM be held under the constitution. The first step is for the committee to indicate their preferred route which can then be put to clubs • In this, as with several of the following matters, it is recognised that communication within clubs will be compromised with members not physically attending or, perhaps, some clubs not meeting regularly (or at all) 	<p>Individual committee members to indicate</p> <p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cancel 2020 AGM (clubs would need to ratify) 2. Hold AGM by video 3. Hold AGM by email / post
Presentation Evening	<p>The April 2020 Presentation Evening was postponed. The holding of a Presentation Evening is unlikely to be feasible in the short term so options are a complete cancellation; continued deferral to be rearranged when possible; or acceptance now that re-arrangement is unlikely to be feasible in the next few months and make the decision now to 'merge' the 2020 and 2021 Presentation Evenings given that 20-21 activity will be curtailed at best and 2021 awards are likely to be much reduced. There is, of course, the possibility that April 2021 may still be problematic. Engraving of trophies could proceed when practical to do so.</p>	<p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cancel 2. Continue to defer 3. Merge 2020 and 2021 events in April 2021

LEH Final 19-20	<p>The 19-20 LEH competition reached the final stage (Woolhope v Ross) but the final was postponed. The 20-21 competition is considered separately below but it is unlikely to be undertaken in its normal form so continuing to defer the match is more feasible than with some of the other postponed events. Otherwise the title could be shared or the competition declared void. Competition Secretary recommendation: Defer and attempt to reschedule by March 2021</p>	<p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declare 19-20 LEH null and void 2. Defer final and aim to reschedule by March 2021 3. Declare shared title
Bromyard Triples 19-20	<p>The Bromyard Triples scheduled for March 2020 was postponed. Entries had been received and fees paid. This competition could be deferred but given the likelihood of any competitions that are possible in 20-21 being compressed into the second half of the season it would seem sensible to simply cancel the 2020 competition. Competition Secretary recommendation: Cancel the 2020 competition and refund fees paid</p>	<p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defer to later in 20-21 2. Cancel the 2020 competition and refund fees paid
Winter League 19-20	<p>The 19-20 Winter League was suspended with 10 matches outstanding in Division 1 and 8 in Division 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most teams had either 1 or 2 fixtures to play (2 had completed their fixtures, 1 team had 3 fixtures left and 1 had 4). Somewhat unfortunately the two teams with 3 and 4 fixtures remaining were the two teams in contention for the Division 1 title. • Under the latest ESMBA route map there is no specific date given for resumption of fours play but inter club activities are not proposed before November 2020 which would be 8 months after the suspension (at least) • Whilst continued deferral is still possible a meaningful completion of the fixtures would now seem a fading possibility (particularly given the factors considered below under Winter League 20-21) • The league could be declared null and void but this may be considered illogical with so many fixtures completed • Final league positions could be declared based on average points gained in completed fixtures. An average point score per team would be calculated separately for home and away matches and the two resulting figures themselves averaged to give an overall average point score per team by which final placings, titles and promotion / relegation would be determined. This methodology compensates for different numbers of completed home and away fixtures. This calculation was used to determine the majority of football leagues below the top two professional divisions which completed their fixtures. • League Secretary recommendation: Determine leagues on average points 	<p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declare 19-20 league null and void and commence next league based on 19-20 starting positions 2. Continue to defer completion of outstanding matches to later in 20-21 3. Determine 19-20 league on average points

Membership & Fees 20-21

- The ESMBA have declared that 'The ESMBA membership will remain due for the Association'. This membership fee refers to individual player memberships - £4 of the total current annual £7 membership fee (£3 being retained by HSMBA).
- For info: Bowls England waived and refunded all membership fees for outdoor bowls in 2020
- Club membership fees of £20 per club are retained by HSMBA as are all league and county competition entry fees
- HSMBA have the option to reduce or waive any of the fees accruing to them – club registration (£20 per club) / HSMBA element of player registration (£3 per player) / league entry (£10 per team) / competition entry (£4 per player). League and competition entry fees fund the operation of those events so club and player registration fees seem most appropriate to consider for reduction / waiver in the event of a significantly curtailed programme of bowling
- Although club registration fees are not paid to ESMBA, club registration is a condition for taking advantage of the ESMBA / Sutton Winson club insurance scheme and ESMBA have introduced a further condition that a club must have at least 6 registered members to qualify for the scheme. These same conditions have also been applied for any clubs wishing to apply for help from the ESMBA Emergency Fund and it has also been verbally suggested that a club would require 6 registered members to attain Safe Bowls Status (although the documentation does not support this).
- HSMBA normally registers players and collects player membership fees only when players register for either the county leagues or county competitions or wish to enter a national competition (including ICC). Depending on the decisions taken in respect of this season's activities there is a possibility that there will be no such trigger for player registrations until November 2020 or beyond. Committee needs to consider whether to request / encourage payment of player registration fees notwithstanding an absence of organised activity
- Participants in the 19-20 Nationals finals to be held in April 2021 will need to register for 20-21
- The 20-21 finances for the association will depend on the structure of the season, particularly as regards leagues and competitions, so a decision regarding the appropriate level of fees can be best taken after decisions regarding the structure of the season have been made and the Treasurer can make a projection of the association's finances for the year

Vote on options:

1. Defer request for player registration fees until firmer plans in place for league / comp activity
2. Request player registration fees as normal alongside club registration (amounts will depend on decisions taken re HSMBA portion of fees) and leave to clubs / players to decide whether to register
3. Actively encourage immediate player registration in line with ESMBA expectation

Ratify strategy:

1. Treasurer to prepare fees proposal for consideration by the committee based on decisions taken regarding leagues and competitions for the current season
2. Club registration process to be progressed (with or without a registration fee)

Winter League 20-21

- Registration forms for the Winter League would normally be issued now but this is not practical under current conditions as many clubs are likely to be unable to determine whether they would realistically be in a position to enter
- The ESMBA route map gives no specific date for Fours play resumption but inter club activities are currently scheduled to resume in November 2020. This does leave enough time to complete a normal winter league, particularly if the extant proposal regarding league structure resulted in three divisions and fewer fixtures (although this would not ordinarily be determined until entry levels were known – chickens and eggs running round each other here)
- Many individual clubs will undoubtedly develop safe playing arrangements for their venue in line with extant Covid-19 distancing and playing guidelines but, in many cases, these will necessarily require quite strictly regulated behaviour and mechanistic accordance to protocols, particularly for Triples and Fours play. Whilst perfectly adequate for social play, such arrangements may not be conducive to competitive inter club play with players unfamiliar with a venue’s requirements and protocols
- Many venues will be unable to accommodate play on more than one mat under the ESMBA Covid-19 guidelines, particularly as regards a 3m spacing between mats
- Observing appropriate Covid-19 safe practices whilst travelling to matches is an issue with many players dependant on fellow club members for transport
- Clubs may have members who are unable / unwilling to participate at all which may jeopardise a club’s ability to field a team
- The combination of these factors and the impact on clubs / players suggests that the integrity of a regular winter league would be severely compromised
- In the absence of a regular winter league the association could, in conjunction with clubs, explore alternative, one-off inter club competitions should conditions permit and clubs / players be interested. Any competitions organised by HSMBA would be for registered clubs and players
- **League Secretary recommendation:** Cancel the 20-21 winter league and explore alternative inter club competition options later in the year

Vote on options:

1. Defer a decision regarding the 20-21 winter league
2. Cancel the 20-21 winter league and leave the option open for alternative, one-off inter club competition(s) should there be an appetite

County Competitions 20-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESMBA route map proposes that County Open competitions could resume from December 2020 • The position of Competitions Secretary will fall vacant as the incumbent is unable to continue in the role beyond September 2020. A priority for the association is to fill this post in order that competitions can be run when Covid-19 conditions permit • There is no immediate requirement to formulate a schedule proposal with competitions not being possible until December or beyond and the likelihood is that any County Competitions that do take place will be scheduled in Jan – Mar 2021. • Scheduling of competitions will depend on a number of factors: appointment of Competition Secretary, appetite for the different competitions amongst the membership, ability to run the different competitions under ESMBA Covid-19 guidelines, venue availability 	Ratify strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canvas for candidates for Competition Secretary (with or without an AGM) 2. Review competition options in November 2020 and develop proposal for competition scheduling
LEH 20-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the same considerations apply to this competition as to the Winter League as regards participants, venues, travel, playing arrangements • The ESMBA route map currently provides for inter club activity to commence from November 2020 • Whilst scheduling of this competition often presents a problem for clubs in a hectic fixture schedule, in the absence of a full programme of league or competition fixtures it may be possible to accommodate the LEH, or a variant of it, in the second half of the season should circumstances permit • Competition Secretary recommendation: Cancel LEH for 20-21 	Vote on options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cancel LEH for 20-21 2. Defer a decision on the tournament until later in 2020 with a view to possibly playing in Jan – Mar 2021
Macmillan 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Macmillan tournament normally takes place in November • The ESMBA route map allows for county open competitions to run from December 2020 but running the currently configured competition at its current level of entries under ESMBA Covid-19 guidelines would represent a significant challenge in any venue • The competition could be run in a revised format with fewer entries, probably in the Jan – Mar 21 period, and this could be considered alongside a potential county competitions schedule for that period • Competition Secretary recommendation: Defer a decision with a view to playing in some format by March 2021 	Vote on options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cancel 2020 Macmillan 2. Defer a decision on the tournament until later in 2020 with a view to possibly playing under a different format in Jan – Mar 2021

National Qualifiers 20-21	ESMBA have postponed the 19-20 National Championships to April 2021 and declared that no qualifiers for the 'main Nationals' will take place. The players who qualified for the 19-20 Nationals will now play their finals in April 2021 when the 20-21 Nationals would normally have taken place. The 19-20 Over 55 Pairs and Mixed Fours finals were played and ESMBA propose that qualifiers for the 20-21 competitions in these disciplines will be played in Jan / Feb 2021	Ratify strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Mixed Fours and Over 55 Pairs qualifiers will be scheduled, conditions permitting, for Jan / Feb 2021. Revisit this matter in Nov 2020. 2. Advise 19-20 Nationals qualifiers that the finals will be held in April 2021
County Teams 20-21	The 20-21 ICC competition has been cancelled, although the ESMBA have indicated that they will organise some 'regionally focussed competitions' later in the season	No action required at the present time
Return to Play Timetable	Whilst HSMBA is able to make specific decisions in accordance with local circumstances we should always be in line with ESMBA guidance. HSMBA should ensure that the local timetable is at least in line with, or lagging behind, ESMBA proposed timings	Ensure at all times that plans for resumption of play are at least in line with extant ESMBA guidance
Club Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful to the association in developing a strategy for league and competition play for the later stages of the season to understand clubs' particular situations and thus their ability / willingness to participate in any events which may be organised • Club registration will be required (with or without a fee) so the registration forms could be accompanied by a simple questionnaire which will help the committee understand where clubs currently stand as regards the coming season. This questionnaire could be re-circulated in October / November when further decisions are being considered. The questionnaire could also aim to identify any obstacles that clubs foresee towards gaining Safe Bowls Status 	Ratify strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire to be developed to establish club positions regarding the 20-21 season 2. Questionnaire to be circulated to be completed as of August 2020 and then again in October / November 2020

<p>Covid-19 Playing Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSMBA should ensure that local guidance is at least in line with, or more stringent than, ESMBA guidance • Most clubs will be constrained by venue requirements and many village halls will themselves be being guided by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) whose comprehensive and extensive guidance includes that <i>‘sport and exercise should take place in accordance with guidance issued by the relevant governing body for the sport or activity to deal with COVID-19 risks. ACRE recommends village and community halls require hirers to comply with such governing body guidance, rather than try to adapt their own hiring conditions and policies for each type of activity’</i>. In addition, the government’s own guidance regarding the return to the playing of recreational team sport states that <i>‘... these mitigations allow for competitive sport to take place whilst maintaining appropriate compliance with social distancing and permitted group sizes. This is only permitted if this guidance is fully implemented by a national governing body (NGB) and complemented by a public health approved action plan for each sport, with activity taking place under an official governing body’s oversight’</i>. As a result, ESMBA guidelines on Covid-19 playing conditions are crucial to clubs in re-commencing play • ESMBA ‘Covid Action Plan’ has been distributed to clubs • It may help clubs for HSMBA to issue a bullet point summary of the ESMBA guidance to signpost clubs towards the essential elements of the guidelines • Clubs have to secure ‘Safe Bowls Status’ via County Safeguarding Officer in order to restart activity • ESMBA guidelines are based on full 2m distancing at all times (with the exception of specific circumstances for equipment handling in restricted storage spaces) and there is no requirement for, or reference to, wearing face coverings during play. The HSMBA may wish to adopt a policy regarding face coverings or issue guidance to clubs and players, in all cases emphasising the importance of understanding there are individual circumstances when face coverings cannot / may not be worn and that the wearing of face coverings is essentially altruistic – the benefit is predominantly for those coming into contact with the wearer 	<p>Ratify strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HSMBA to issue a document to signpost clubs towards the key elements of the ESMBA Action Plan which need to be understood and followed 2. HSMBA Safeguarding Officer to keep committee informed of clubs which have secured Safe Bowls Status <p>Vote on options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HSMBA to mandate face coverings to be worn (subject to exemptions) 2. HSMBA to give individual clubs the option of implementing mandatory face coverings (subject to exemptions) 3. No further action – individual player choice as to whether face coverings are worn
------------------------------------	---	---